Gunston Classics

PETER RABBIT AND THE LITTLE GIRL

Linda Almond

Gunston & The Book Bunnies

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LINDA STEVENS ALMOND

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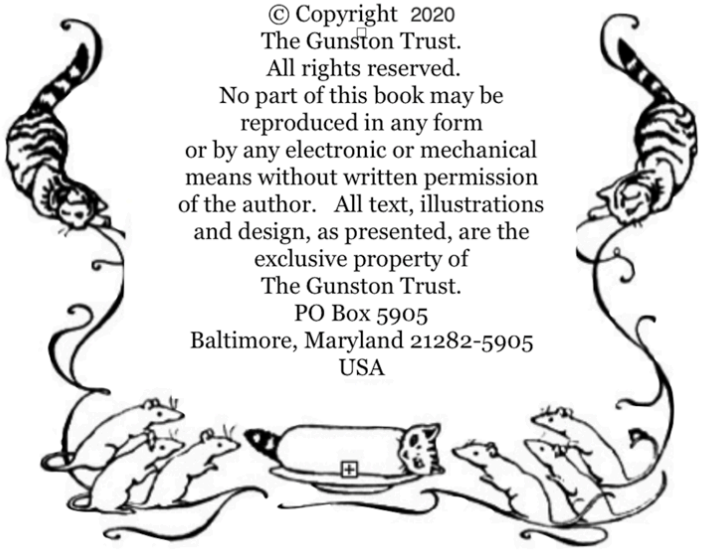
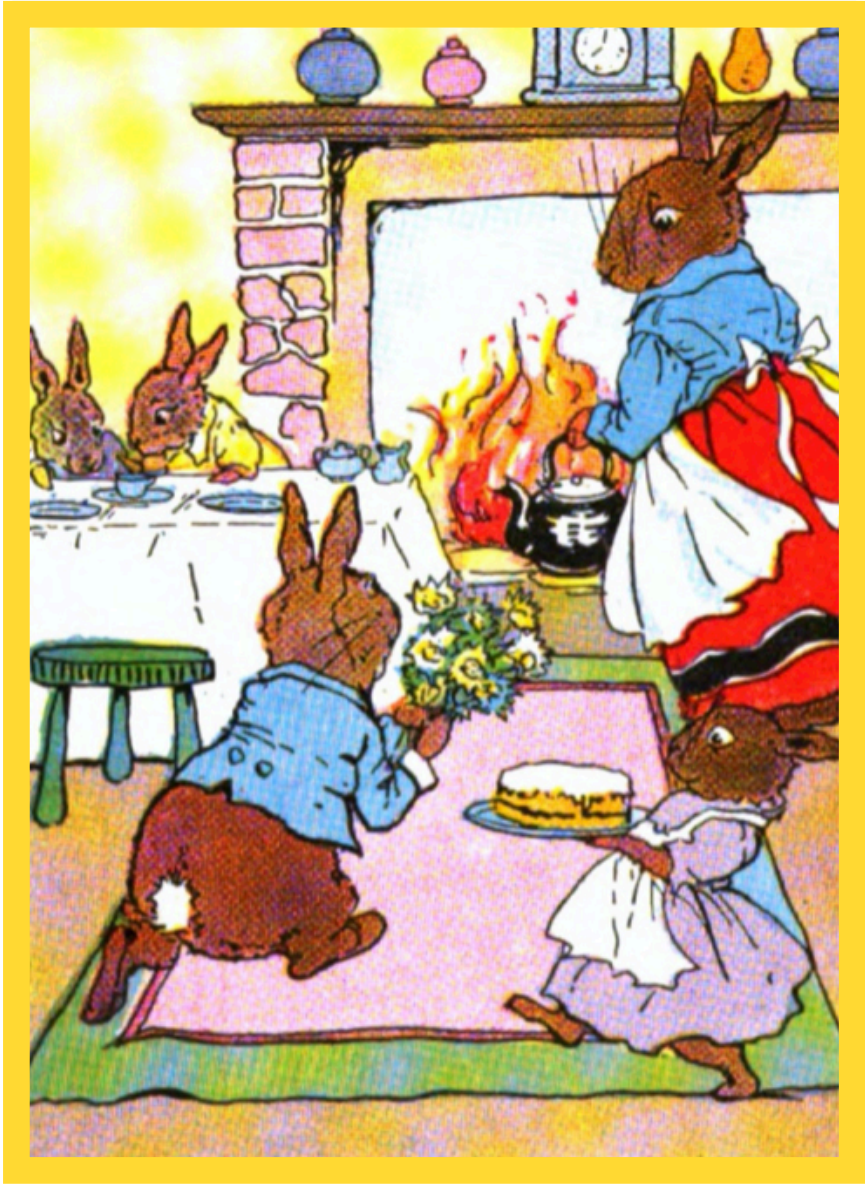


PETER RABBIT AND THE LITTLE GIRL

Linda Stevens Almond

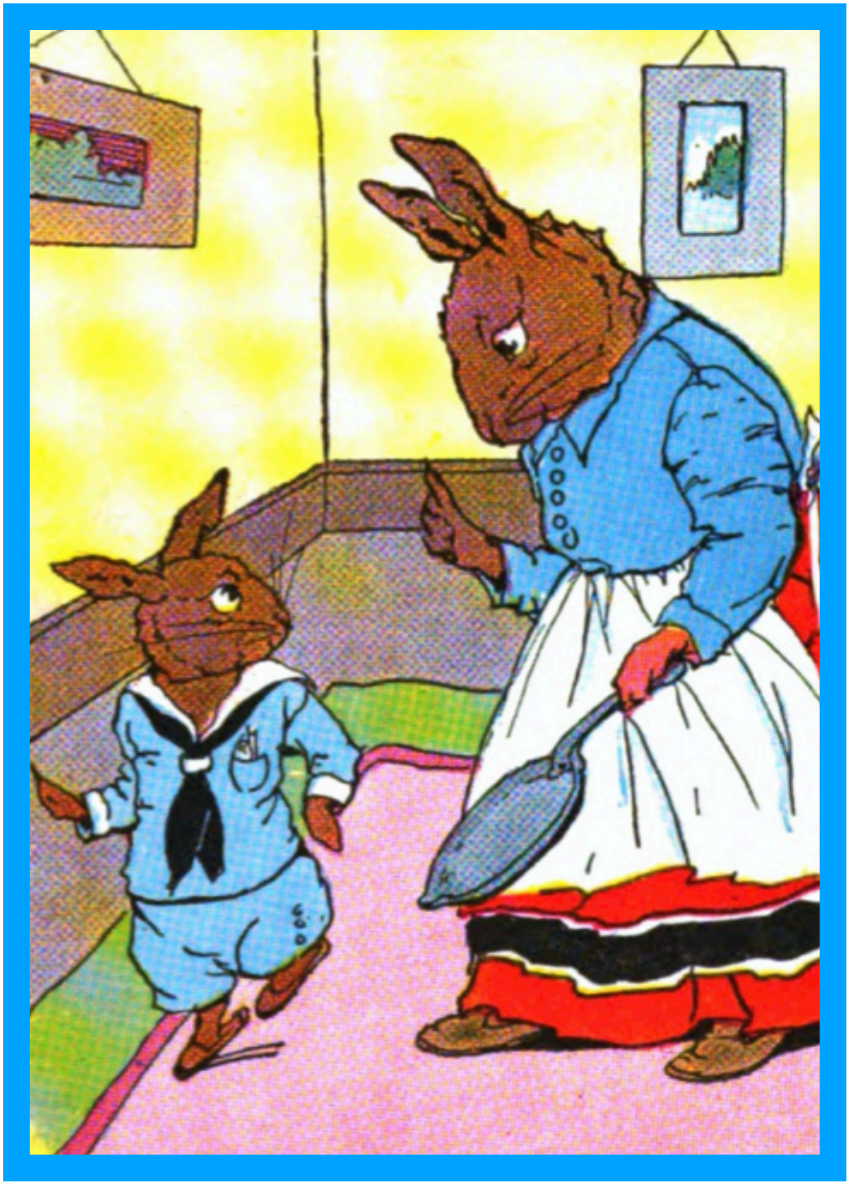
ONE summer morning the little rabbit house looked nicer than ever, for Mother Rabbit was giving a Tea Party at five o'clock that afternoon for the Bunny Sewing Circle.

Mother Rabbit had been up since daybreak cleaning house until every thing was as neat and clean as a new pin. Besides, Mother Rabbit had made all kinds of goodies, and Flopsy and Mopsy and Cotton-tail had set the table, and Peter had gone to the field to fetch a bouquet of daisies.



At last, when everything was ready, Mother Rabbit said: "Peter I want you to go to Miss Betsy Bunny's Pastry Shop for Carrot Cakes for the party, because you are such a fast runner."

He would have started at once had not Mother Rabbit said he must put on his new sailor suit.

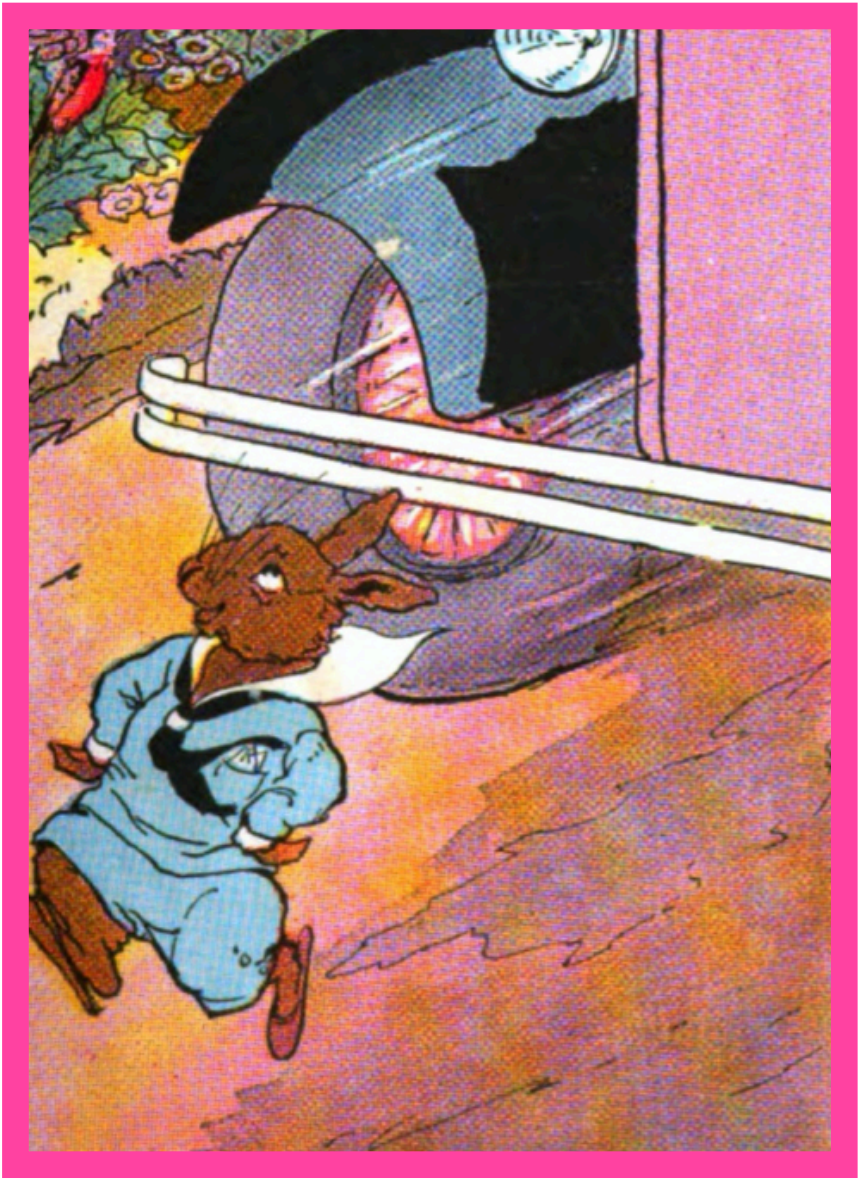


When he was ready to start Mother Rabbit called Peter to her side and said: "Now, pay attention, Peter."

"Yes, Mother," answered Peter, but he was in such a hurry to get off that he stood first on one foot and then on the other

"Keep still, Peter, and listen," ordered Mother Rabbit. "Do not stop on the way, and be careful with the cakes,"

Peter promised to do as his mother had said, and off he scooted.



Birds were singing gayly in the treetops. Flowers were blooming along the roadside, and Peter felt happy. Presently he bagan to sing, and he was singing so loud that he did not hear a terrific 'HONK! HONK! HONK!" behind him. It was too late to get out of the way, and the next moment an automobile went right over poor Peter Rabbit.

The automobile stopped down the road, and a Little Girl and a Big Man jumped out and came running up to Peter.

"Oh, we've run over a poor little rabbit!" cried the Little Girl, but as luck would have it Peter wasn't hurt, for he had crouched so low that the automobile never touched him. So he sat up and rubbed his eyes and stammered: "I-I'm not k-killed, if you p-please."

The Little Girl was so relieved to hear Peter speak that she began dancing all about, when suddenly she said: "Oh, Little Rabbit! How would you like to go to the Seashore? We are going there to spend the day."

Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle went Peter's ears. Twitch, twitch, twitch went his pink nose. Seashore! Oh, goody! Oh, what fun to go to the Seashore! Sad to relate, Peter had forgotten all about his promise to his mother. He had forgotten all about the Carrot Cakes. He had forgotten all about the Tea Party. All he could think of was Seashore! Seashore! Seashore! So he said: "Please, I'd love to go to the Seashore, Little Girl."

"All aboard!" called the Big Man. Peter wanted to pinch himself to make sure he really was Peter Rabbit, but the Little Girl picked him up by the ears and climbed into the automobile. Then with a "Chuck-chuck-chuck-a-chuck" they went a-whirring down the big road.

They rode and they rode, and they rode. All the while the Little Girl was telling Peter about the fun they were going to have at the Seashore. They would play in the sand, and ride the ponies, and visit the Toy Man's Stand. But best of all they would go bathing.

"But you must not venture far from the shore," said the Little Girl, "Because, if you do, a big wave might knock you down."

Peter gave a little shiver and said he would not go out far. In fact, he would just as soon not go in the water at all. For his part, he did not like the water a bit.

"You mustn't be afraid," said the Little Girl. "You're not a baby."

"I should say not," Peter replied.

"Why, my three little sister are younger than I am."

By and by they felt the coolest breeze, and, almost before they knew it, they saw that they had reached the big blue ocean. It was all Peter could do to keep on his seat in the automobile. But he knew that would not be polite, so he sat as still as a mouse.

Whiz! they went along the road until they reached the beach. First they stopped at the Toy Man's Stand to buy a bucket and shovel for the Little Girl, and a tiny bucket and shovel for Peter.

It was such a lovely place, and there were so many wonderful things to look at on the Toy Man's Stand, that Peter said he would like to stay there all day. But the Little Girl told Peter they would come back to the Toy Man's Stand after a while.

Then the Big Man put up a big umbrella. When Peter saw the water lilies on the big umbrella he jumped up and down and said: "Oh, lookee! They are just like the water lilies in Billy Bull Frog's pond."

The Little Girl called to Peter to come and look at the Sand Fiddlers. Peter had never seen Sand Fiddlers before, and he laughed so to see them go scuttling for dear life down into their sand-hole homes. He wanted to catch some of them to put in his bucket, but the Little Girl told Peter he mustn't do that because Sand Fiddlers liked to play in their own Playground, way down deep in the sand.

"Oh yes," said Peter, "just like we like to play in our own Playground on top of the sand."

The Little Girl nodded and said: "Let's make sand pies now."

Peter thought that was a girl's game, so he said he would rather make a sand fort. Just when he was finishing his sand fort a little fuzzy dog romped into it and "PLOP!" the sand fort went all to pieces. Peter set up an awful howl.

"Peter, if you will keep quiet," said the Little Girl, "we will have a pony ride." Peter became quiet at once. What was a sand fort to the fun of riding a pony? So they ran over to the place where the ponies stood waiting.

The Little Girl rode all by herself, but the Pony Man led Peter's pony up and down. Peter did not think much of that, but still it was better than not riding at all. After they had ridden up and down a number of times Peter said he would like to do something else.

"Let's put on our bathing suits and go in bathing!" cried the Little Girl.

"Well, you see, I haven't a bathing suit," said Peter, feeling quite relieved that he had an excuse not to go bathing.

"My big dolly's bathing suit will fit you, Little Rabbit," said the Little Girl.

"My name is Peter," said Peter. "And, if you please, I'd rather not go in bathing."

"Very well," replied the Little Girl. "You can sit on the beach in the bathing suit and take a sun bath."

Then the Big Man and the Little Girl put on their bathing suits, and Peter put on the big dolly's bathing suit. It was bright red and fit him to a T.

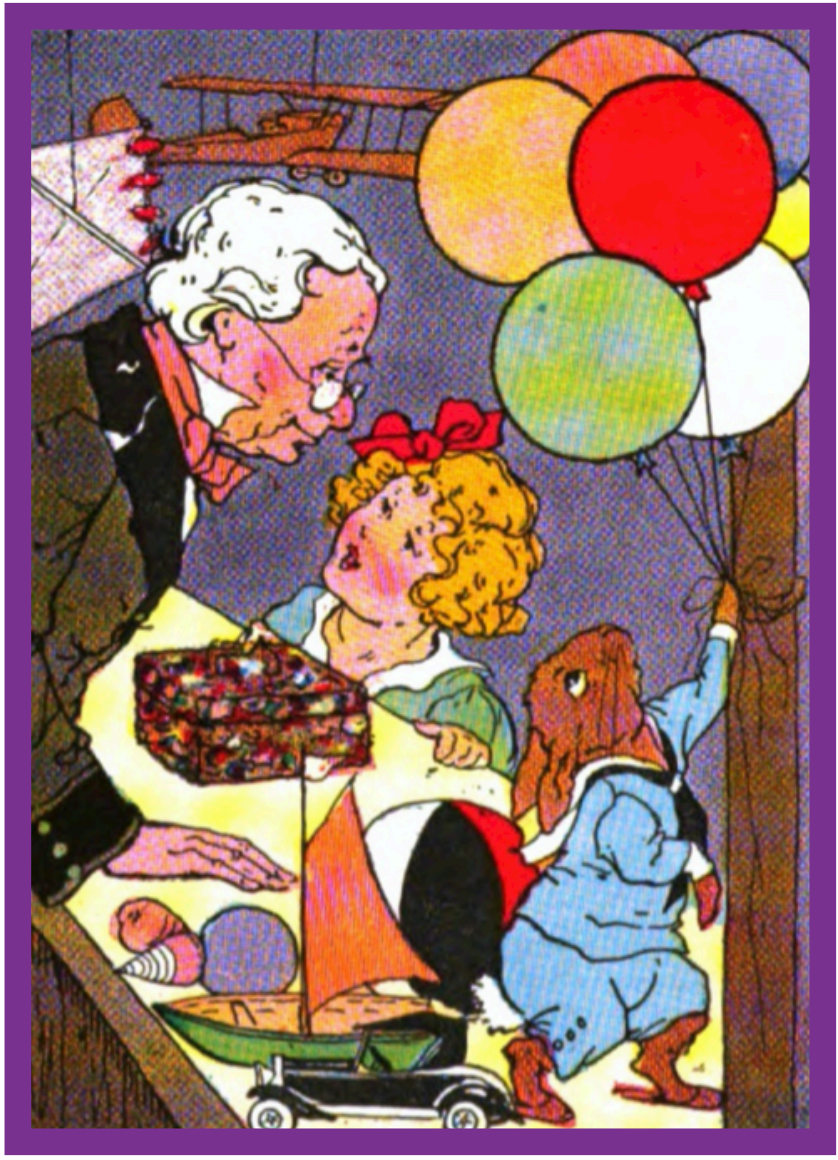
But before long Peter got tired of having a sun bath, so he began to walk about looking for sea shells. He was having lots of fun when all of a sudden a great big wave rolled up along the beach and 'SPLASH!" Peter was dripping wet in a second.

The Little Girl just laughed and laughed. Besides, nearly all of Peter's sea shells were washed away.

"Oh, I'll help you gather more sea shells," said the Little Girl.

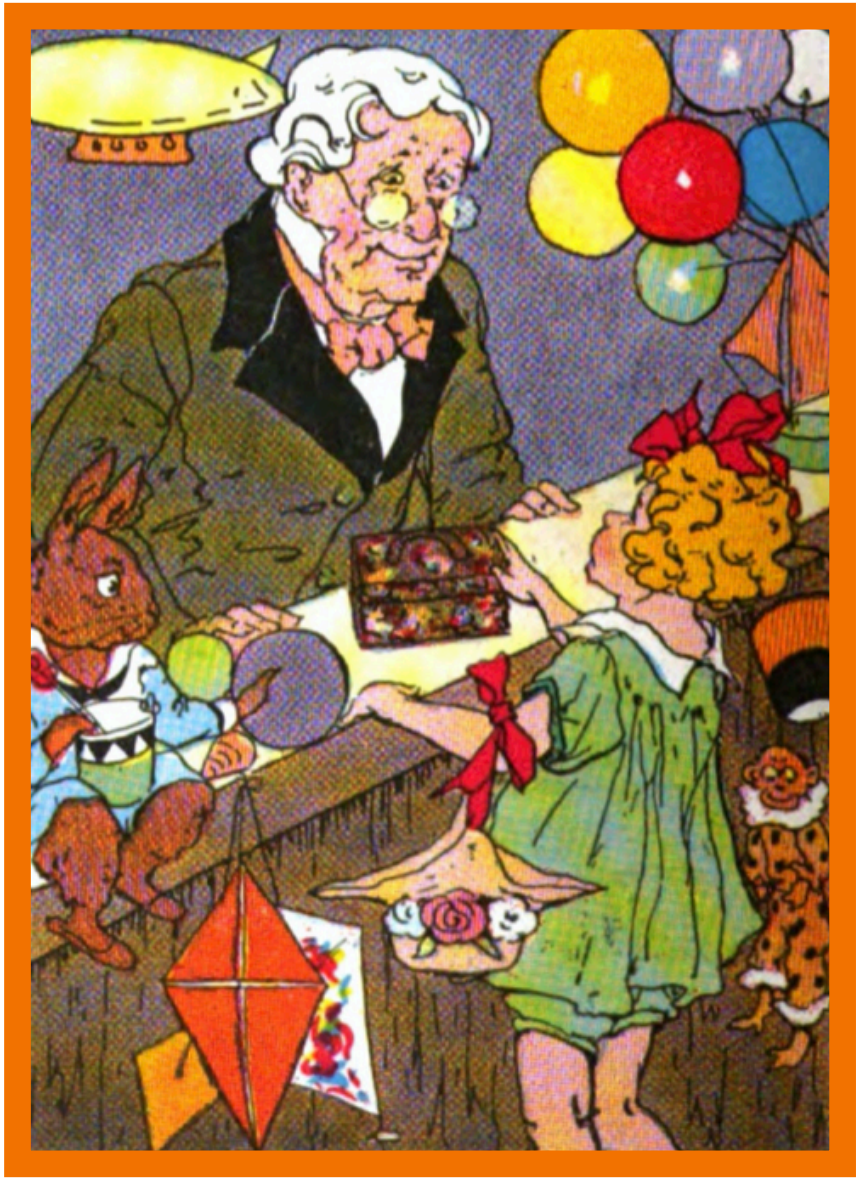
So they set to work, and when they had filled Peter's bucket to the brim it was time for lunch.

After they were dressed they went under the big umbrella and spread a cloth on the sand, and while they were having lunch along came the Popcorm Man calling: "Popcorn! Fresh popped popcorn!" Of course Peter wanted some of the popcorn and when he had tasted it he wouldn't eat anything else. The Little Girl was afraid that the popcorn might make Peter sick.

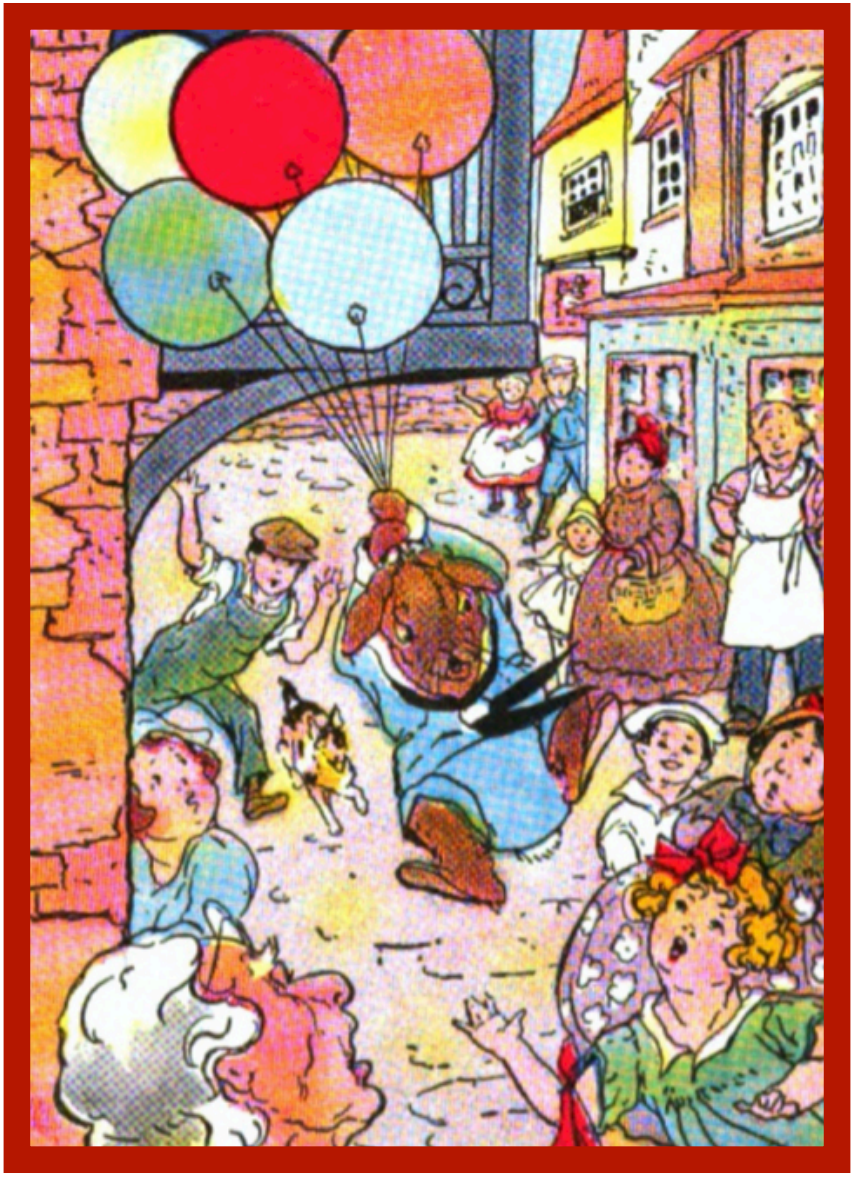


Then they went back to the Toy Man's Stand. There were so many wonderful things to see that Peter's eyes almost popped out of his head. There were sail boats, and airplanes, and automobiles, kites, and tops, and balls, and dear knows what all.

There Peter spied a great big bunch of toy balloons tied to a post.



While the Little Girl was asking the Toy Man about a little work basket Peter edged closer to the balloons. He thought it would be nice to touch them. He did--and gracious! up, up, up in the air went the bunch of balloons with Peter hanging on!



"Help! Help! Help!" he yelled, frantically kicking his legs.

Everybody was running this way and that, calling to Peter: "Hold on! Hold on! Hold on!"

Peter was nearly scared out of his wits, but he held on, and in a little while the bunch of balloons sailed safely into the upstairs porch of the Toy Man's store.

Everybody yelled: "Bravo! Little Rabbit!" And Peter felt very proud and important. When the Toy Man had brought Peter down the Little Girl gave Peter a hug and said:

"Weren't you nearly scared to pieces, Peter?"

"Well, I-I s-should say n-not," said Peter. But just the same he was trembling all over.

The Toy Man had to chuckle when he herd Peter say he wasn't frightened. While Peter wasn't looking, he made up a little package for him to take home. There was a little canoe in the package, and a set of mud-pie tins in fish shapes, and a tiny conk shell in which you could hear the roar of the ocean when you put it to your ear.

Peter was very much pleased, and he made a polite bow to the Toy Man and said:

"Thank you very much, sir."

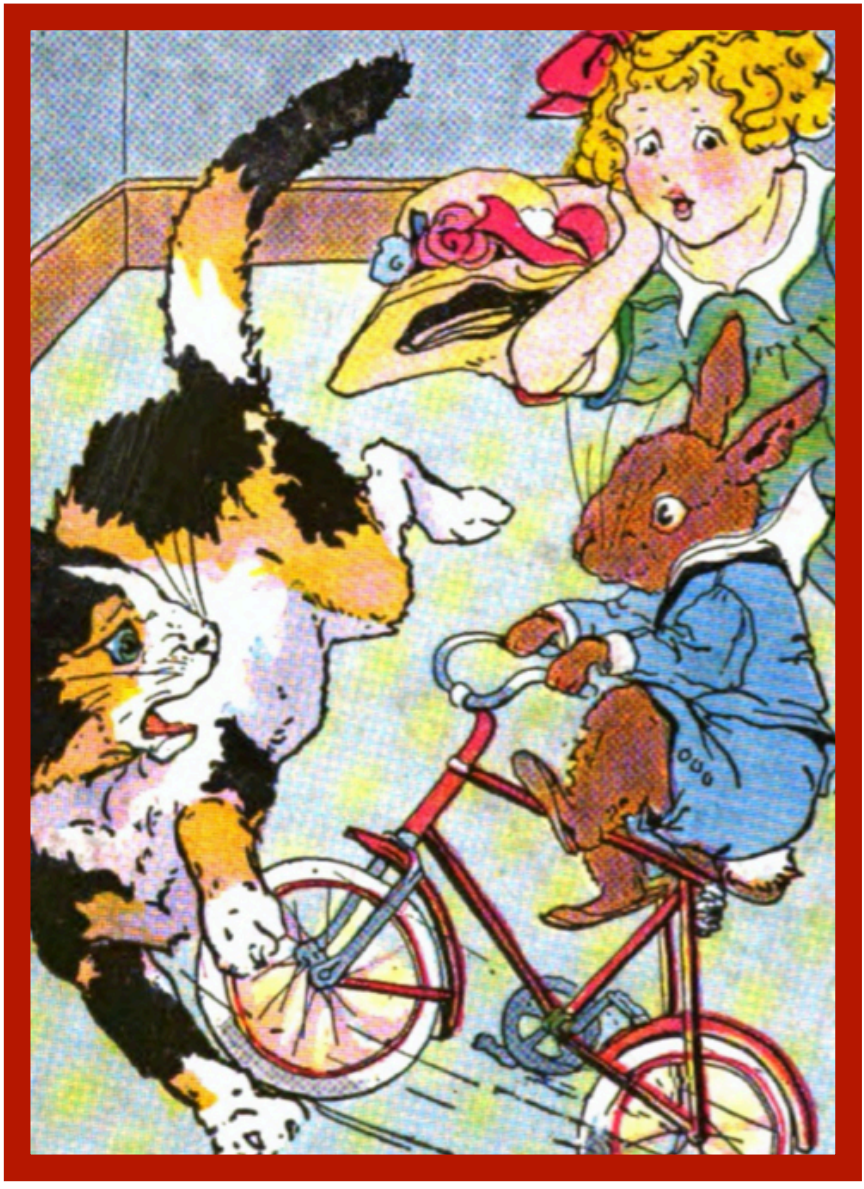
"Now, Peter, were are going to play the String Game," said the Little Girl.

"Goodness! What is the string Game?" asked Peter.

"Well," began the Little Girl, "There is a prize at the end of each string, and you choose a string and pull it, and you won't kow what your prize is until it comes out of the box."

Peter hopped up and down and clapped his hands. "You take the first turn, Little Girl," he said.

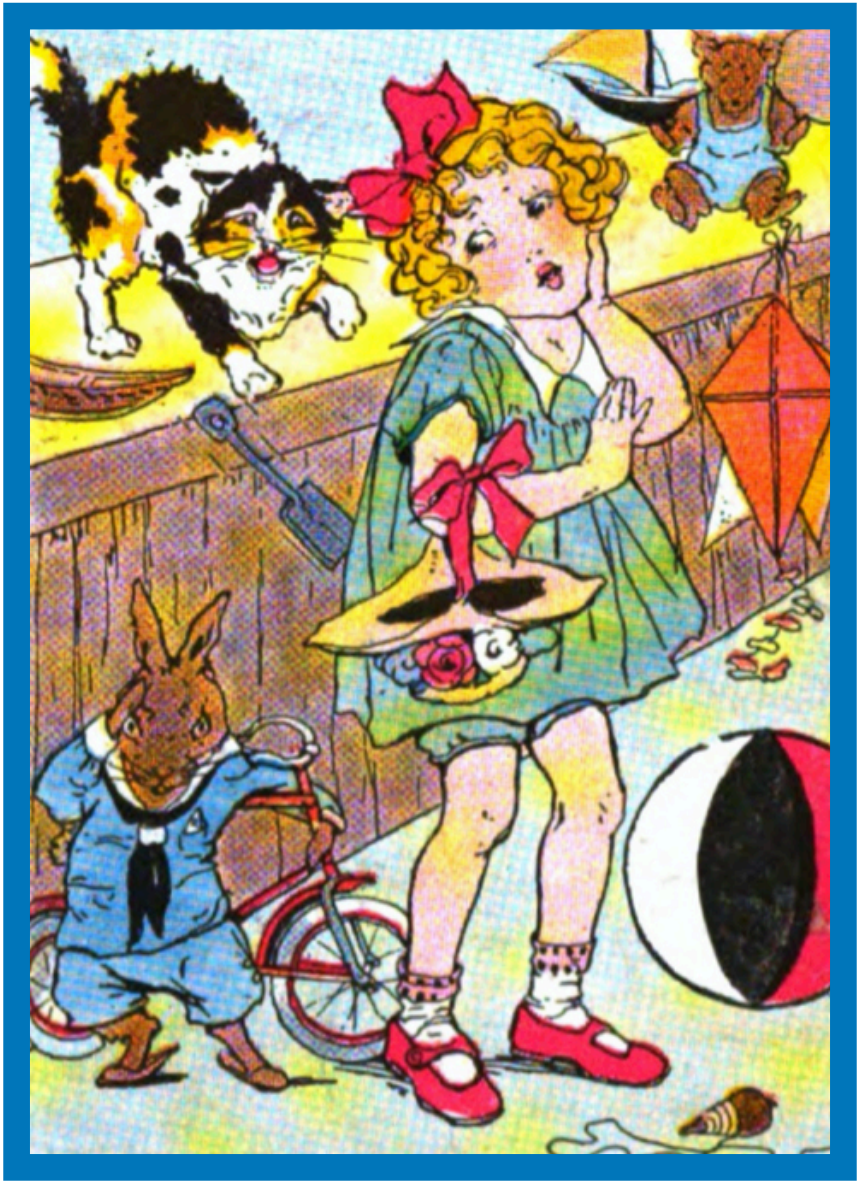
The Little Girl pulled the string and what do you suppose was her prize? Why, just exactly what she had wanted--a little work basket. Then Peter pulled, and how he pulled, but his prize would not come out.



At last the Toy Man said: "Here, let me pull." then a bicycle the right size for Peter came out.

"Hip, hip hooray!" squealed Peter, and then went riding up and down at such a rapid rate that he ran PLUMP into Nicodemus, the Toy Man's pet cat. Nicodemus was so angry that he shrieked "Such manners! Just like a rabbit from the backwoods!"

I'm not from the backwoods!" retorted Peter.



"Oh, dear!" said the Little Girl, "If you two are going to quarrel we had better be going home."

At that Peter cried out: "Oh, my goodness!"

"Are you sick, Peter?" cried the Little Girl, very much alarmed.

"I--I'm not sick," wailed Peter.
"It's worse than being sick."

"Well, what is it then?" asked the Little Girl.

"I forgot all about going to Miss Betsy Bunny's Pastry Shop to get the Carrot Cakes for my mother's party, which is to be held at five o'clock this afternoon. And Peter began to weep.

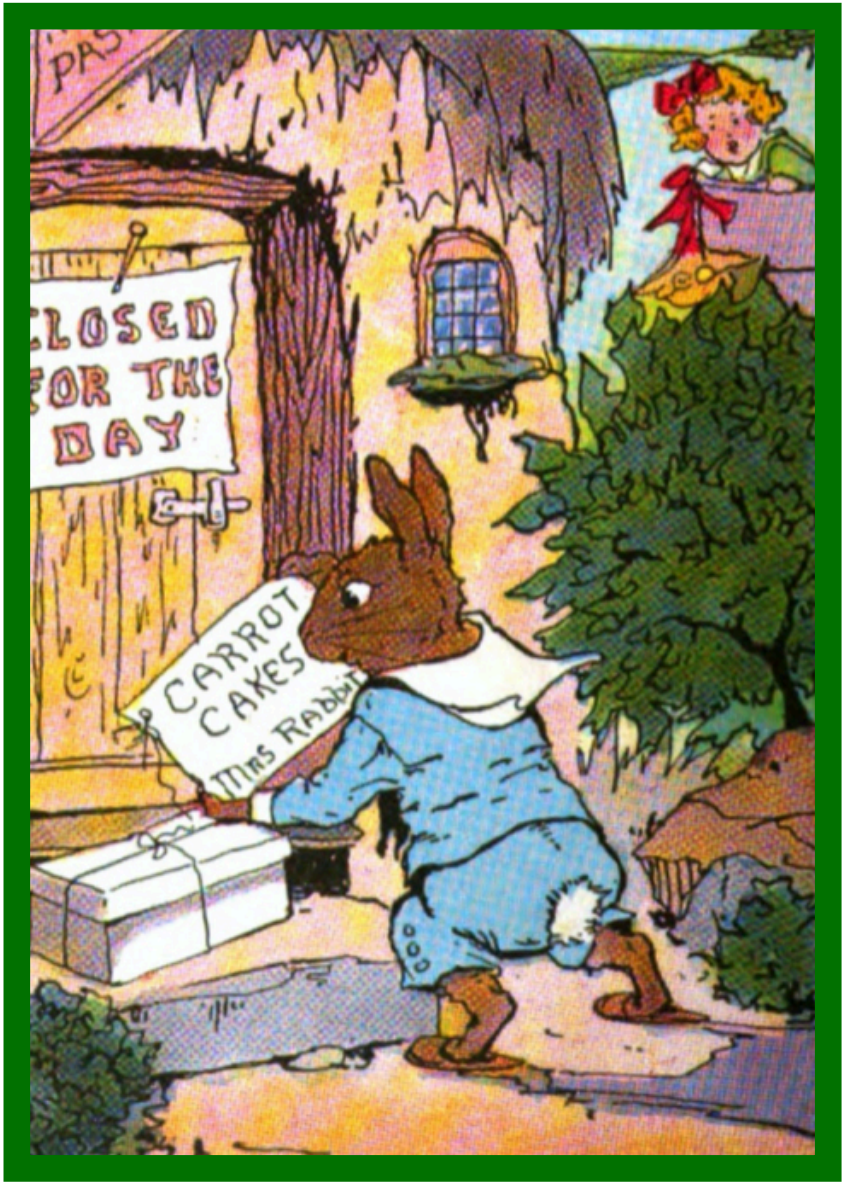
"Don't cry, Peter," begged the Little Girl. "Maybe we can get you there in time for the party."

MISS BETSY BUNNY'S
PASTRY SHOP
CLOSED
FOR THE
DAY

"Of course we can," said the Big Man, "If Peter will show us the way."

At that Peter brightened up, so they gathered up their things, got into the automobile, and whizzed away.

Peter told the Big Man which way to go, and before long they reached Miss Betsy Bunny's Pastry Shop.


CLOSED
FOR THE
DAY
CARROT
CAKES
Mrs Rabbit

Peter jumped out and, sure enough he found a box with a card on it which said:

CARROT CAKES FOR MRS. RABBIT.

"What luck!" cried Peter. "And now I'll ride home on my bicycle. It isn't far from here."

"All right, Peter," said the Little Girl. And then the Big Man put Peter's bicycle on the gound, and fastened the shovel, bucket, cakes, and package to the handle bars.

"Goodbye, Peter!" call the Little Girl.

"Goodbye, Little Girl!" call Peter. "I've had a lovely time!"

And with that Peter mounted his bicycle and went spinning down the road toward home.

CARROT
CAKES
MRS RABBIT

Mother Rabbit and Flopsy and Mopsy and Cotton-tail were at the gate. Mother Rabbit looked as cross as two sticks, but when Peter told her all about his trip to the Seashore, and about the bicycle, and about the package of presents from the Toy Man, she said she would just have to forgive him this time !!

THE END

Gunston Classics

LINDA ALMOND
USA
1881-1987

PETER RABBITS' BIRTHDAY

PETER RABBIT AND LITTLE WHITE RABBIT

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT TO SCHOOL

PETER RABBIT'S EASTER

PETER RABBIT AND THE OLD WITCH WOMAN

WHEN PETER RABBIT WENT A-FISHING

PETER RABITS' WEDDING